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## EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENTS IN ENGLAND<sup>1</sup>

### I.

Two prominent features at once engage the attention of any student of educational movements in England at the present time. A deep and widespread ferment possesses the educational mind, and the products of this ferment have little to do with education itself—education as it would be understood by a constant reader of the *Educational Review* or the SCHOOL REVIEW of America. We are today in the position of those who are yet building the house and have not arrived at the problems of furniture. More than that, the irony of fate has long forbidden us to build a noble and substantial mansion of culture. We are, so to speak, provided with a vast number of separate chambers diversely built and curiously furnished, and the force of a new and irresistible impulse, beginning to play upon our ancient repose and time-honored satisfaction, bids us forthwith put these heterogeneous chambers compactly together and raise a mansion of culture at once stately and strong, beautiful outwardly, and within furnished with all that makes for lasting comfort and imperishable good. Those who think of the former seek to know why our costly education has so little value in the mart of prosperity. Those who think of the latter require an answer to the deeper problem—Why, with so much preparation for the battle of life, is there so little readiness when the trumpet sounds and the drums beat for action, and the great gates of youth close behind us upon the sham fights of scholastic contest and academic emulation? With both the question is, Why are the ends and the means so glaringly incommensurate?

Hidden in many disguises and sounding in a multitude of varying tones, this is the keynote of the educational unrest which

<sup>1</sup> This is the first of a series of articles on this subject that will appear in the SCHOOL REVIEW. Mr. Hill, who is the editor of the London *Educational Review*, will hereafter write regularly for this magazine.

now strives and struggles in England behind the catch-cries of organization, correlation, registration, and that most blessed of all war cries—reform. The quaint and curious phases of this great movement I propose to throw upon the screen for the entertainment, and perhaps the edification, of the readers of the *SCHOOL REVIEW*; yet, so strangely are its workings entangled, so utterly incoherent are its motives, that I am conscious my best efforts cannot reveal the movement to my American readers save “as through a glass, darkly.” And I must crave their indulgence while I clear the ground for a true understanding of this movement by giving first a sketch of the educational workshops, as it were, of England, and then of the educational forces, scholastic, examinational, literary, social, and parental, which both control and are controlled by those workshops of knowledge and character.

But even before this we must draw a sharp distinction between education and education—between the education which enthusiasts dream of, scientists write about, and some teachers, mostly women, try earnestly to practice, and the education which absorbs the interest and energies of the vast majority of English schoolmasters and many schoolmistresses, and converts the numerous educational associations into armed camps more or less covertly at war one with another, more or less misunderstanding one another’s motives, methods, and aims. In the ranks of the advocates of the former stand the memories of Pestalozzi, Froebel, Herbart, and the living presence of their disciples—a small band—urging us to set character above wisdom, wisdom above knowledge, and knowledge above success. Among the advocates of the latter towers the hydra-head of public-school tradition and the irresistible forces of the examination boards and, with one exception, the incorporated associations—a mighty host—which fights unceasingly for a competition growing daily more sterilizing and more pernicious, and draws constantly closer the bonds of an organization whose main object is to secure the worldly stability of the teacher and convert education into a sure and ready means to social, political, and financial eminence. And here again we must distinguish.

No one would be more indignant than the average English headmaster, if he were charged with being false to the spirit of education. Yet he cannot deny that most of his time is spent in perfecting the means for winning open scholarships at the universities for his best boys, not in improving his general pedagogic processes. In striving, therefore, to grasp the true inwardness of English education, we must bear in mind that for the vast majority of English teachers education means the winning of scholarships and the passing of examinations, not the getting of that rare wisdom, the price of which is above rubies, or the formation of that noble character which is truly a man's sole justification for existence and his best legacy to posterity.

These are facts; but, like most facts, they bear a double interpretation, and it is easy to misread them. This pernicious examination steeplechase, this ceaseless striving after money prizes, does not mean that our teachers are all tradesmen and intellectual gamblers. It means that our educational system is in a state of chaos, that there is no such correlation of studies, collaboration and organization of effort as would ensure, first, a liberal education for every unit of society; next, a perfect facility for native merit to rise naturally from the slum to the high places of mind and manners; and, lastly, for the teacher, the freedom from pecuniary problems and competitive stress which would set him as far as the poles apart from the vender of dry goods and gold, the man of profit and the man of chance. Whence it comes about that for the science of teaching, the manufacture of mind, the average English teacher cares little. His soul is occupied, his energies are strained to the utmost, in solving these knotty problems, which press upon him from every side with overmastering force, How shall I improve my salary? How shall I secure myself from sudden dismissal? What methods will most enhance my reputation by making my pupils do best? What changes can I bring about in examination schemes to increase my chances of winning examination successes? How best can I secure most of those money prizes which will attract pupils to my school and enable me to pay my way and keep my school prosperous in the midst of many rivals?

Nor is the pressure of these problems any the less genuine because the teacher does not care to formulate them in the bald brutality of plain English, but prefers to wrap them in the kindly vagueness of that blessed word, *organization*. And if the answer to these questions should be as it is, "By eschewing that which makes only for wisdom, culture, and character, and seeking after that which secures marks, money, and honors," who shall blame the teacher if he turns a deaf ear to the prayers of the theorist, and kicks against the pricks of the reformer? In studying educational movements in England, we must, then, bear in mind that the day of pedagogics is not yet. What we are doing now is to secure the teacher's status against the machinations of social, clerical, and commercial enemies—those who would degrade him to the position of a vender of cheap goods, or bind his conscience in the fetters of bigotry and prejudice, or buy wisdom from him at the sweater's rates.

First, then, let us glance at the educational workshops of England and consider their number, nature, and work. Roughly speaking and excluding isolated experiments and individual idiosyncrasies, English education may be divided into three classes—primary, secondary, and technical. The first falls into two marked groups—religious and secular. Religious primary education is carried on in the Sunday schools attached to churches and chapels, and in voluntary schools on week days. It is of the most elementary character, almost entirely scriptural and save for the optional influence of the Sunday School Union in the former case, entirely unorganized. Secular primary education is carried on in voluntary schools and board schools, the former in part and the latter almost entirely supported by the state. Voluntary schools are divided into two little distinguishable kinds—national schools, founded originally by the National Society for the Education of the Poor at the instance of Dr. Bell, and British schools, founded by the British and Foreign School Society at the instance of his rival, Joseph Lancaster. Both are denominational, the former being supported and controlled as to their religious instruction by the Established Church of England, and the latter by the nonconformists. They are

visited by government inspectors, and, being subject to the education department codes, the education they undertake is organized. The board schools consist of day and evening continuation schools managed by locally elected school boards and controlled by government inspectors and examiners. The education they give is elementary, largely free, elaborately organized and subject to the provisions of the day and evening continuation school codes issued by the education department of the government. The compulsory free instruction is limited chiefly to the three R's reading, writing, and arithmetic, coupled with a certain amount of elementary technical instruction in the arts and crafts, and in science and domestic economy; but other subjects, like Latin and French, are touched optionally.

Secondary education is of three kinds — preparatory, second grade, and first grade. Under the first head come such public, private, and proprietary schools as limit their attention to elementary subjects and their pupils to ages varying from seven to fourteen years, and the kindergartens, which profess to carry out Froebellian principles, their pupils being often as young as three years. Such schools and kindergartens swarm all over the kingdom, are entirely unorganized and absolutely irresponsible, the education they give being in many cases a mere farce. Among second grade schools are the higher board schools, which carry the education given in the elementary board schools to a higher point and more advanced ages approximating to those of the high schools, but stopping short of Greek and Latin and leaning somewhat to science and technology. Here also may be classed the numerous private and proprietary middle class schools intended chiefly for the children of business men, whom social considerations repel from the board schools. These require something of a polite education, but their parents care nothing for the higher culture involved in a study of the classics, and have for their children no ambition towards a university career which they themselves, in their business prosperity and the wordly wisdom arising therefrom, appear to have done very well without. Narrow means may be pleaded as some excuse for this indifference to

higher culture, but the plea is too often coupled with an entire disinclination to make any sacrifices for the sake of education. These children usually, in middle class parental parlance, "finish their education" at the age of fourteen and begin to "do something for themselves" at five shillings a week, with ultimate results which the pedagogue sighs over in vain, and the shortsighted parent realizes, if at all, only when advancing age has rendered any remedy too late.

The first grade schools are those which recognize the study of the classics as an integral part of their curriculum and retain their pupils to the age of seventeen, eighteen, or even nineteen years. Among these are the innumerable public, private, and proprietary high schools, the great endowed schools and grammar schools, which alone were at one time recognized as public schools, including among them the public school called Eton College, and those schools which affect the name of college. This term has been degraded latterly by that extraordinary disorganization of education in England, which allows any illiterate adventurer to start a small school in a private dwelling-house and dub it a college. These great public schools provide in theory all the elements of a liberal education, but till recent years the English educational world has been content to accept a large deduction from their professed liberality. Not far back in their history, modern languages, literature, science, and handicrafts formed no part of their curriculum, and there was left only a disputable gymnastic of Greek and Latin grammar amplified by the tonic of a vast body of questionable social traditions, which credulous parents and indiscriminating theorists lauded as the microcosm of "public school life," an institution of national pride and honor. But one feature of the present ferment is the lifting of the veil from this delusion and the introduction of nobler ideals and a more truly liberal curriculum into the public schools. In this category also are the universities, which minister to the highest culture, and the university colleges, which form a link between them and the public schools. But the education comprised in the first grade is organized only in so far as it is guided and controlled by the

examinations for degrees granted by the universities. The conditions of these examinations being, however, traditional, more or less arbitrary, and rigidly controlled by the exigencies of a false pedagogical principle, competition, their organization makes far more for harm than good, and one of the burning questions of the day is the mending or ending of these all grasping public examinations.

Technical education is provided in a humorously haphazard manner, but in a large degree efficiently, by art schools, organized science schools, *i. e.*, schools whose science department is organized in accordance with the regulations of the science and art department of the government,—monotechnic and polytechnic institutes, which have both day and evening classes for the further instruction of youths already earning their living in workshops. And here perhaps may be included the centers for training pupil teachers in the board schools, the government training colleges for elementary teachers, and the public and proprietary training colleges for secondary teachers, of which there are several for women but only one or two for men. These various institutions, scattered up and down the country, which have sprung up at all sorts of odd times and in all sorts of odd ways and owe allegiance to a variety of authorities in no way collaborating with each other, are responsible for the education of England.

But they are merely the tools. Behind them lie the vastly more important forces which more or less directly, more or less openly, wield their resources or influence their motive powers. These are of six kinds—governing and examining boards, educational associations, educational journals, social prejudices, and parental ideals.

Of governing bodies, the first in rank is the education department of the government. Through its inspectors and examiners, the government grants depending on their report, and its school codes, it controls all secular primary education; through its science and art department it holds in a grip of iron the organized science schools, such secondary schools as submit candidates for the science and art certificates, and all technical



schools which are aided by its grants, there being few which are not so aided; and, finally, through its recently established department of special inquiries and the reports now being issued therefrom it promises to exercise a wide and deep influence for good on educational science at large. The actual working of the board schools is controlled by the school boards locally elected and influenced to a certain extent by local opinion. These also issue a private code of regulations for the guidance of their officers. Public and proprietary secondary schools are controlled only by their locally appointed governing bodies or their deeds of foundation, many of them having submitted their foundation schemes to the revision of a body known as the charity commissioners, who, however, exercise no further control beyond drafting the scheme and seeing that its provisions are not departed from without express permission. Proprietary schools usually belong to public or private companies, like the Girls' Public Day School Company. Colleges and university colleges are generally governed by councils composed of the teachers or professors, while universities are managed by a convocation and senate, elected by the graduates from their own ranks. The University of London, however, constitutes in some respects a department of the English civil service and is largely controlled in financial matters by the state treasury. Latterly the technical education boards of the county councils, and especially that of London, have come into prominence, as wielding a great power over technical institutions of every kind and the science departments of all classes of secondary schools, through the grants in aid which they give and the conditions of building and curricula which they exact in return.

Of educational associations, by far the most powerful both in numbers and influence is the National Union of Elementary Teachers, which now drops the qualification "elementary" and professedly opens its doors to all teachers in the land. There are, besides, the 'Association of Principals and Lecturers in Training Colleges, the Private Schools' Association, the Assistant Masters' Association, the Association of Assistant Mistresses, the Head Mistresses' Association, the Incorporated Association

of Head Masters, the Head Masters' Conference, the College of Preceptors, the Froebel Society, and the Teachers' Guild, not to mention others of less note and more limited influence. These exercise great but varying influence through their members. All, with the exception of the last, had their origin in the need of defending sectional rights and interests in the educational world. The Teachers' Guild alone stands for the rights and interests of education *per se*, admitting to its ranks not only any teacher, man or woman, in the kingdom, whatever his or her grade or rank, but all who are interested in education whatever their profession or occupation. Of the others, two only have not self-explanatory titles. The Head Masters' Conference consists entirely of the heads of the endowed first grade public and grammar schools for boys, which include among them the great public schools, like Eton, Harrow, Rugby, etc., and are mostly of old standing. At one time it affected an aristocratic exclusiveness and forbade its members to join the Incorporated Association of Head Masters. But wiser counsels and the growing influence of the latter more democratic body have led to the rescinding of this rule. The College of Preceptors is the oldest of these associations and was originally founded in the interests of teachers in private schools, who still largely sway its operations. But the presence of a number of distinguished educationists of a larger public spirit in its council has brought it to the front in the present efforts to establish a more liberal and scientific system of education and improve the qualification and status of teachers.

Such is the apathy of the average English teacher towards the science of pedagogics that there are but three educational papers which make any pretense of aiming at the high example set by the American *Educational Review* and SCHOOL REVIEW. Of these the *Educational Review* of England alone puts the science of education in the forefront of its contents, and consequently has the smallest circulation. The *Educational Times* is, despite occasional articles of a scientific nature, to all intents and purposes a newspaper, and probably owes its large circulation almost entirely to the fact that it is the official organ of the

College of Preceptors. The *Journal of Education* is the only high grade educational paper that stands upon its own legs and commands a wide circulation. But, for this circulation, it also depends on the vast mass of educational news and educational politics for which it serves as a vehicle. The excellent articles on educational science which it frequently publishes are "caviare to the general," and often bear avowedly the character of a supplement in no way connected with the main business of the issue. Other papers, like *Education*, *Secondary Education*, the *Preparatory Schools' Review*, the *University Correspondent*, the *University Extension Journal*, the *School Guardian*, the *Schoolmaster*, and the *School Board Chronicle*, are really educational newspapers busy almost entirely with educational news and educational politics. The discussions initiated by these papers exert a widespread influence on educational politics and a more limited influence on educational science.

But far above any influence exerted by the forces already mentioned is the power of the public examining boards. The chief of these are the universities, which grant degrees of proficiency after competitive examination; the local examining syndicates of the Oxford and Cambridge Universities, which conduct an elaborate system of annual local examinations, covering nearly the whole school career of boys and girls, and stereotyping by their exigencies the curricula of the schools they examine; the Oxford and Cambridge joint board, which conducts a similar examination of a more advanced character; the College of Preceptors, which conducts another elaborate system of local examinations; the University of London, with its degree examinations, which do not at present, like those of the older universities, require any qualification of residence, this university being merely an examining and not a teaching body; the science and art department, which conducts open examinations in special subjects, granting certificates of various grades therein; and the technical education board of the London county council, which has created a perfect ladder of scholarships, granted after examination to pupils of limited means, leading from the elementary schools to the universities. Less universally influential are the examina-

tions of the Society of Arts, the musical, medical, and theological colleges and schools, and the examinations of schools conducted by individual examiners sent from the universities and by the joint scholarship examination board of the Incorporated Association of Head Masters.

The force of social prejudice makes now, as always, in the direction of class selection. Many private schools owe their prosperity to the enormously high fees which exclude the child of the poor or professional man, and others to the rigid inquisition which bars their doors to the children of tradesmen, sometimes, by a travesty of refinement, refusing the child of the butcher and baker while admitting that of the chemist. And it is the social force also which frequently turns a boy aside from the city of London school or university college school and sends him to Eton or Harrow, Rugby or Winchester.

Lastly, the parental force—the value-for-money demand of the business parent, the culture-for-sacrifice requirement of the professional parent—has begun to play powerfully upon the educational associations and educational manufacturers of the day. Quite recently a small number of determined parents have started a school under their own absolute control, and the eyes of educationists are turned eagerly towards the experiment of “rational education” these parents have initiated.

Thus I have set forth the body of educational effort now existing in England, and we may proceed to consider the various problems that naturally arise out of such conditions. In this first letter I cannot do more than state briefly the leading problems before English educationists. In succeeding letters I hope to elaborate them.

Organization is the first great problem; but the scope of the term is differently interpreted. To some of the educational associations I have named organization means simply the safeguarding of sectional rights and interests. To the independent educationist it means the abolition of overlapping in educational effort, the rational distribution of educational opportunities throughout the country, the classes, and the masses, and the cohesion of all all education from the kindergarten to the university.

Registration, again, means to some of the associations the educational recognition of their members in preference to those of others. But the independent educationist understands by it the state recognition of those teachers only who have the quadruple qualification of knowledge, experience, training, and communicative capacity.

Correlation of studies is another problem with wide possibilities in the hands of reasonable teachers, but fruitful of untold absurdities in the hands of impulsive and inexperienced enthusiasts.

Other questions under discussion are the possibility of making a practical connection between psychology and instruction, the method of making education useful in business life without sacrificing culture, the question as to what really constitutes a liberal as distinct from a utilitarian education, the democratizing of university instruction, the reform of the competitive examination system, the proper proportion between athletic and intellectual exercises; the pecuniary stability, social status, and intellectual training of the teacher; the conservation of educational cost; the relative adjustment of scientific, technical, and formative education; the encroachment of sectarian prejudice upon the domain of secular education, the concentration of all education under state control, the entire liberation of elementary education from pecuniary hindrance, the state inspection of private schools, the co-education of the sexes, the limits of age and scope in compulsory education, and, lastly, the amalgamation of the metropolitan educational institutions into a great teaching university for London.

These problems press for solution with more or less insistence and excite a varying interest among theoretical and practical educationists. If those which are political in their nature predominate over those which are more truly pedagogic, it is because, as I have said, we are still in the day of elemental rearrangement and the time for constructive progress is not yet. And if to the enthusiastic scientist—the devotee of Pestalozzi or the disciple of Spencer, to whom these political readjustments are banal and wearisome—the picture of existing effort is

dreary and dark, it is because the tramp and the dust of the contest must come before the wearing of the laurel, and the darkness must precede the dawn. The gloom of our pernicious examination system is studded with the light of manifold individual efforts to break from its cramping, sterilizing clutch, and the dull stagnation of our public-school system is illuminated by the educational emancipation of women and the growth of such bodies as the Parents' National Educational Union and the Teachers' Guild. The one, crude as its efforts are, makes for the ultimate interference of a power before which examining boards and sectional associations must bow obediently or be utterly broken. The other is carrying more and more widely through the land, more and more deeply into the spirit of the teacher, the conviction that organization, registration, correlation, association, are only means to an end which is entirely beyond and above those means, namely—pure and simple education.

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